

ceived from Mr. Landbeck. It seems quite distinct from the two preceding species—though I should like to compare it with *S. uropygialis*, which I have not yet been able to do.

Messrs. Philippi and Landbeck have given us an excellent account of its nesting and habits.

10. SYCALIS CITRINA.

Emberiza citrina, Natt. MS.

Sycalis citrina, Pelzeln, Orn. Bras. pp. 232 et 333.

Hab. San Paulo (*Natt.*).

This species seems to be quite distinct from any other known *Sycalis*, having a white spot on the inner web of the two outer tail-feathers. I have never been fortunate enough to come across a specimen of it. It is, perhaps, the same as *Fringilla xanthorrhoea* of Bonaparte (J. Ac. Sc. Phil. iv. p. 350 (1825), et Consp. p. 521), though, as v. Pelzeln shows, Bonaparte's description does not quite agree with it. But I know of no other bird to which Bonaparte's description is more applicable.

Appendix specierum dubitatarum.

In Mr. G. R. Gray's most useful 'Hand-list of Birds' (ii. p. 84) twenty species are assigned to *Sycalis*. Of these I have already disposed of eighteen. The remaining two are:—

No. 7238.—*S. plumbea*. *Chlorospiza plumbea*, Ph. and Landb. (Wieg. Arch. 1864, p. 47), which is *Phrygilus unicolor* (see my remarks, P. Z. S. 1867, p. 322); and

No. 7239.—*S. erythronota*. *Chlorospiza erythronota*, Ph. and Landb. *ibid.* 1863, p. 121, which is in all probability also a *Phrygilus*, but is not known to me.

VII.—On *Nyctale kirtlandi*.

By D. G. ELLIOT, F.L.S., F.Z.S., &c.

IN the fifth volume of Shaw's 'Naturalist's Miscellany,' an Owl is described and figured as *Strix albifrons*, and its *habitat* stated to be North America, particularly Canada. In 1852, Dr. Hoy published, in the 'Proceedings of the Academy of Na-

tural Sciences of Philadelphia,' the same bird under the name of *Nyctale kirtlandi*, stating that two specimens had been procured; and this name was continued by Cassin in his 'Illustrations of the Birds of California,' and a figure given. Baird, Cooper, and others, in their respective works, have also kept this form distinct, but restored Shaw's name of *albifrons*, making *N. kirtlandi*, Hoy, a synonym. So few specimens in the plumage of *N. albifrons* having ever been seen, this bird has been allowed to retain a place among the feathered tribes of America as a species; and I am happy to be able, from proofs which have lately come into my hands, to accord this bird its proper place in the American and European avifaunas. In a small collection of birds, lately received by Mr. R. B. Sharpe, to enable him to make some investigations for his work on the birds of Europe, there was a specimen of an Owl from the neighbourhood of Barcelonnette, in the Basses-Alpes, marked as the young of *Strix tengmalmi*, which I at once perceived to be the bird named by Shaw and Hoy respectively. In order to make its parentage more sure, Mr. H. E. Dresser, and Mr. Bond, at my request, kindly placed in my hands a young and old of *Nyctale tengmalmi*. Mr. Dresser's specimen of the young bird is from Wytegra, Lake Onega, Russia, and that of Mr. Bond from Granheim, Norway; so I have representatives from most distant localities. The specimen belonging to Mr. Sharpe from Barcelonnette is the youngest of all, and approaches closest to that described by Dr. Hoy; the others, although in similar plumage, have begun to exhibit the mottling on the lower part of the breast. There is no doubt whatever about these examples being the young of the true *N. tengmalmi*, as every particular is recorded upon the labels that came with them. As there has been considerable doubt among ornithologists regarding the specific distinctness between the *N. tengmalmi* of Europe and *N. richardsoni* of America, I thought that this would be a favourable opportunity, while investigating the young, to examine also the adult birds from the two continents. The result arrived at is that they are identical. In fact, there are two specimens lying before me—one from Norrland, Sweden, belonging to Messrs. Sharpe and Dresser, taken from their magnificent

collection of European Birds, and one procured in North America, from Mr. Dresser's private collection—between which there is no appreciable difference whatever, either as regards colour or markings, which, as every ornithologist knows, is very rarely found among specimens of so variable a family as the Strigidæ, particularly among the smaller species. As I am not aware that the young of *Nyctale tengmalmi* (as I propose to call all those heretofore known under this name and that of *richardsoni*) in its various stages has ever been especially described, I have thought it might perhaps be useful to ornithologists to give a full description of these most interesting specimens committed to my charge, and to add a list of the synonyms which will properly belong to the species.

NYCTALE TENGMALMI.

Strix tengmalmi, Gmel. Syst. Nat. p. 291 (1788); Lath. Ind. Orn. p. 64. sp. 42; Swain. & Rich. Faun. Bor.-Amer. (Birds), pl. 32, p. 94; Aud. Orn. Biog. vol. iv. pl. 509; Id. B. of Amer. pl. 380. figs. 1 & 2; Id. B. A. 8vo ed. vol. i. pl. 32; Temm. Man. d'Ornith. vol. i. p. 94; Naum. Vög. Deutsch. vol. i.

Noctua tengmalmi, Yarr. Brit. Birds, vol. i. p. 146; Selby, Brit. Orn. vol. i. p. 105; Gould, B. of Eur. vol. i. pl. 49.

Syrnium tengmalmi, Eyton, Rare Brit. Birds, p. 90.

Strix albifrons, Shaw, Nat. Misc. vol. v. pl. 171.

Nyctale albifrons, Cassin, Birds of Calif. p. 187; Baird, B. Amer. p. 57; Coues, Proc. Acad. Nat. Scien. (1866) p. 50.

Nyctale richardsoni, Bonap. Comp. List (1838), p. 7; Baird, B. Amer. p. 57; Cassin, Birds of Calif. p. 185. sp. 1.

Nyctale kirtlandi, Hoy, Proc. Acad. Scien. Phil. (1852) p. 210; Cassin, Birds of Calif. p. 63.

Nyctala tengmalmi, Newton, 4th edit. Yarr. Brit. Birds, p. 154.

Adult Male.—Upper part of head, and entire upper parts, umber-brown, rather thickly spotted with white on the head; the spots fewer but larger on the nape, wing-coverts, and secondaries; primaries same as back, spotted on both webs with white, the spots on the inner webs being largest; tail also umber-brown, both webs having four white spots equidistant

from each other ; a white ring around the eyes ; bill covered with black bristly feathers ; facial disk white, some of the feathers blackish on their edges ; a brown narrow ring at the outer edge encircles the disk ; breast and under parts white, mottled with rufous brown ; centre of breast and abdomen nearly pure white ; under tail-coverts white, with a few rufous brown streaks. The specimen described was obtained from Sweden. A specimen from America is precisely similar, so that one description will answer for them both.

Adult Female.—Upper parts rufous brown, with small white spots on the forehead, larger ones on the nape and back ; secondaries with white spots at equal distances on both webs, largest on the inner webs ; primaries with rufous-white spots on the outer webs only ; facial disk light brown on the outer side, surrounded by a line of dark reddish-brown ; white above the eyes, black between the eyes and bill ; throat white, the outer brown edge of the facial disk extending across the upper part of the breast ; lower parts white, mottled with reddish brown ; tail same colour as the back, with five equidistant white spots on each web ; tarsi and feet yellowish white. This is the red variety of this species, and may not in any way be considered a sexual plumage, or belonging particularly to the female. The red and brown styles of dress, as in the *Scops asio* of North America, are apparently assumed without regard to sex or age.

Young Female.—Head and upper parts dark umber-brown, unspotted ; wings same colour, spotted with white on both webs of secondaries, and primaries like the adult ; tail also same as the adult ; stripe over the eye from the nostrils, and also a patch under the eye at base of bill, white ; facial disk blackish brown ; upper part of breast same as the back, rest of underparts yellowish white, the feathers having broad central lines of dark brown ; flanks and under tail-coverts yellowish white ; feet and tarsi yellowish white, spotted with rufous brown ; bill blackish at base, horn-colour at tip. A specimen still younger than the preceding has head, entire upper parts, and upper part of the breast blackish brown ; spot over the eyes and base of bristly feathers at the bill white ; lower part of

breast yellowish brown, a few white spots on the scapulars, and indications on the outer webs of some of the primaries; tail dark brown, and white spots on middle feather; bill greenish at tip, blackish at base.

From the specimens before me, it would appear that this species is very dark when young, and without spots, but becomes lighter and more spotted as it becomes older, and puts on the dress of the mature bird. At all stages of plumage, however, it shows the white over the eyes and at the base of the bill, which caused its first describers to give to it the name of *albifrons*.

VIII.—*Observations on Picicorvus columbianus.*

By ELLIOTT COUES, M.D., U. S. A.

I HAVE no hesitation in inviting your attention to a bird that lacks a biographer, though it is one thoroughly known in the dried state. By bringing together the substance of several detached notices that have appeared, and adding, it may be, some further information obtained whilst I was in the West, we may have an account deficient in little, if any thing:

I should not even allude to the well-known intimate affinity of Clarke's Crow with the European Nutcracker, did I not purpose to illustrate by this means a rule of some general applicability. In this case of typical representation of one genus by another, we have an excellent example of the fact that a number of European birds find their nearest American relations in the species of *Western North America*, instead of those of the eastern province. Sometimes there is actual specific identity; again there is only a differentiation of the same species into geographical races, frequently with positive specific distinctness; in birds of the same genus, either the genus itself is confined to the West, or else, while the genus reaches across America, its western species are more particularly like the European than its eastern ones are; and, lastly, certain genera, confined to the West, are strictly *locum tenentia* of European genera. In the following Table examples of each of these kinds and degrees of